

The Development, Characteris-
tics, Similarity and Dissimilarity
of the Stories of Robin Hood in
England and Robin and Marion
in France

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THE DEVELOPMENT, CHARACTERISTICS, SIMILARITY,
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Part 1.

The story of Robin Hood has "floated down the stream of time" for many centuries and although it may have lost a little of its fascination, there is still an attractiveness about it sufficient to interest many. Because of the similarity of names in the English and French ballads one would naturally think that Robin Hood and Maid Marian might be the same people as Robin and Marion. In reality these characters are not at all similar, and the stories themselves have few points in common. The purpose of this paper is to give the origin and development of the English and French versions of the story and to point out wherein the two are similar, and wherein they differ.

The existing evidences of the widespread popularity of Robin Hood in England are numerous. There is hardly a county which does not claim some sort of relation-

ship to this hero. In York, there is Robin Hood's Bay, and in the same county a spring of clear fresh water called Robin Hood's Well. Robin Hood's companions share their master's popularity. The names of Maid Marian, Friar Tuck and above all Little John are linked indissolubly with that of their leader. The last of these even eclipses the exploits of his chief, if not during life, at least after his death, for according to the chroniclers Little John lies interred in three kingdoms, England, Ireland and Scotland, all offering evidence to prove their claims.¹

It is strange that history has been silent in regard to Robin Hood when his name is so great, his place is so wide and his reputation so abiding. If history in England had been of the people, in the fourteenth century it would have been of Robin Hood. To understand him was to understand his people.

Augustin Thierry seems to be the first to have found any historical significance in the life of Robin Hood. He guesses him to have been an outlaw by birth, the last of the Saxons who refused to recognize Norman rule, and the opponent of Richard Cœur de Lion. Thierry quotes an ancient chronicler, Johan de Fordun as saying:

"About this time (1194) there arose among the disinherited the most famous robber, Robert Hode, with his accomplices,

1. Ed. Rev. Vol. 86.

whom the stolid vulgar celebrate in games and sports at their junketing, and whose history sung by the minstrels delights them more than any other." This, says Thierry, is all the historical data as to the existence of Robin Hood; traces of his life and character must be found in the popular ballads.¹

Mr. Child, on the other hand, insists that the earliest mention of the character is as the hero of ballads; and that the only two historians who speak of him say they have no information except that derived from ballads.² The theory of Thierry and Berry, the two historians mentioned by Mr. Child, does not agree with the ballads, which make Robin Hood loyal to the sovereign not opposing him. The silence of other historians is eloquent, for they mention outlaws, and not this one.

Another writer, speaking of the historical basis of Robin Hood,³ says that if ballads are considered worthless as history, then their character is misunderstood. For ballads were often literal narratives designed for those who could not read: histories published among the ignorant in such a way as was possible. Ballads were about the living as well as the dead. Those about a living man went around among his contemporaries much as a weekly newspaper does. As they were oral, they were liable to

1. Thierry p. 224.

2. Child p. 43.

3. Ed. Rev. Vol. 86.

corruption, but for the same reason they were capable of and subject to correction. For some of the ballads of Robin Hood, it may be claimed that they are better authority than many histories. In the belief of the English peasantry in him and in their feeling for him there is good proof of his having lived.

Robin Hood has not been properly estimated by writers who should have considered him, for he never could have been the ideal of the people merely as a robber, and he was their hero for hundreds of years in a most extraordinary way. Among those who disregard the traditions and the feelings of the peasant about him, he is a robber - and indeed his actions are those of a mere thief if viewed apart from historical connections. But his life is a page in the history of England, which to be properly understood must be read with those pages which tell of the Norman Conquest, of the ways of abbots and barons and of the oppression of the serfs. But the era of Robin Hood has been forgotten, as well as his connection with his times. Even the historians who have mentioned him most favorably have been unjust, because they do not consider his time and circumstances.

Spencer Hale in his *Foresters' Offering* imagines him to have been one of the followers of Simon of Montfort and a fugitive from the battle of Evesham. Mr. Wright, on his *Essay on the Middle Ages* argues that since some of

the legends of the peasantry are shadows of a remote antiquity, they may be trusted, as enabling us to put Robin Hood among the personages of the early Teutonic people. But Robin Hood must remain a myth until some real authority can be produced.

Kuhn, assuming that the mythical character of Robin Hood is established, has tried to show that the outlaw is in particular one of the manifestations of Woden.¹ The word Hooden "a wooden horse", or hobby horse used in the May game may be expounded as Woden, and Hood is a corruption of Hooden, and this Hooden leads back again to Woden. Mr. Child does not approve of this theory; he does not think the hobby-horse can be made to represent Robin Hood.

There is no doubt that Robert or Robin Hood was of Saxon origin. Robin is a French form from Rob, short for Robert; but the French Christian name proves nothing against this claim, for with the second generation after the conquest names of saints and others used in Normandy had superseded the former baptismal names in England. The name of Hood, or Hode, is Saxon and the oldest ballads place the ancestors of him who bore it in the peasant class. Afterwards the poets gave to their favorite the pomp and grandeur of riches; they made him an earl, or at least the grandson of an earl whose daughter gave birth to the hero in the wood. The theory rests on no probable authority, but forms the subject of a popular romance:

1. Child p. 47.

"The Birth of Robin Hood". This is a graceful and interesting ballad, and in it we find the earl giving the name to his grandson:

"And Robin Hood in the gude green wood,
And that shall be your name."

The existence of ballads having Robin Hood as the hero can be traced back to the reign of Edward III. The author of Piers Plowman, writing about 1362 introduces Sloth who does not know his Pater Noster, but is well versed in "the rhymes of Robin Hood". Several of these rhymes probably exist, but none has come down to us from that time in unquestionable form. Robin Hood and the Monk, Robin Hood and the Potter, Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne are all which can be looked upon as of very great antiquity, and these may be some of the legends referred to in Piers Plowman.² References to Robin Hood, or to his story are frequent in the fifteenth century.³ This shows the popularity of the ballads for more than a century before the Geste was printed, and with the invention of printing the story was put on a more prominent footing.

Among the ballads which have come down to us in comparatively ancient form are the following: those from which the Geste was composed: Robin Hood, the Knight and the Monk - Robin Hood, Little John and the Sheriff - Robin Hood and the King - and a fragment of Robin Hood's Death, -

1. Thierry Appendix XXI.
2. Ed. Rev. p. 127.
3. Child p. 40.

all printed probably before 1500; Robin Hood and the Monk, 1450; Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne, Robin Hood's Death, Percy Manuscript and late garlands, Robin Hood and the Potter 1500. Besides these there are thirty-two ballads. Of these Mr. Child says:¹ "About half a dozen have in them something of the popular quality; as many more not the slightest smatch of it. Fully a dozen are variations, sometimes wearisome, sometimes sickening, upon the theme: Robin met his match. A considerable amount of the Robin Hood poetry looks like char-work done for the petty press, and should be considered as such. The earliest of these ballads, on the other hand, are among the best of all ballads, and perhaps none in ~~English~~ please so many and please so long."

Robin Hood was a yeoman, outlawed for reasons not given. He passed his life in the woods at the headral of several hundred archers who, although the enemies of the rich and powerful, shed blood only in their own defense, protected all who were oppressed, and shared their spoils with the honest and industrious. Courtesy, good-temper, and liberality were his chief characteristics. He had a kind of a royal dignity and a gentlemanly refinement of humor, even though he was only a yeoman. This is the Robin Hood of the Geste especially.

The chief comrades are Robin Hood and the Monk, Little John, Scathlocke and Much. Friar Tuck is mentioned

1. Child p. 42.

in two ballads, but plays no part. These two also name Maid Marian, who appears elsewhere only in a late insignificant ballad. The sheriff of Nottingham was the greatest enemy of the outlaw. He set a price on Robin Hood's head, and excited his friends to betray him. But none betrayed him, and many aided him.

The wonderful adventures of the bandit were for a long time the only history that a man of the people in England transmitted to his sons. Popular imagination gave to Robin Hood all the qualities and all the virtues of the middle ages. He was devout in church, and brave in combat. His devotion is the theme of a ballad by the English minstrels of the fourteenth century which is an excellent example of the fresh and animated coloring given by a people to its poetry. But Robin Hood himself had, like the saints, a festival day in which nothing was permitted but games and amusements. The day was religiously observed by the inhabitants of the villages, and the custom was still observed in the fifteenth century.¹ On that day the churches as well as the workshops were deserted; no saint or preacher was more influential than Robin Hood. One bishop tells of his experience at a village church when the people of the parish were celebrating Robin Hood's day, and no one would come to church.²

So it was not only in poetry, but in games, festival days and dramas that the hero was commemorated.

1. Thierry p. 227.

2. N. Am. Rev. p. 14.

He was remembered always and everywhere. He was introduced into May games. These games were of the sixteenth century, and were not limited even to the month of May, for they were not uniform and might include any kind of amusement which suited the public taste. At the beginning of the sixteenth century there were four pageants in vogue in the May sports besides a contest in archery: the Kingham, or election of a Lord and Lady of the May, the Morris-dance, the Hobby-horse and the Robin Hood. They had begun to be confused, and the Morris-dance tended to absorb them all. Maid Marian is the central personage. A fool and a taborer seem to have been indispensable too, but the others had no names nor particular offices. It was natural then that the old favorites, Robin Hood, Friar Tuck and Little John should replace the anonymous players. After the sixteenth century the Lady was generally regarded as the consort of Robin Hood, though she sometimes appeared without him. The May-games of Robin Hood seem to have been instituted principally to encourage archery, and were usually accompanied by the Morris dancers, who nevertheless took no part in the ceremony. Why the adventures of the outlaw should be assigned to the month of May has not been explained, but the romance we always connect with spring time and woodland seem all the explanation required.

We are interested in the part borne by Robin Hood, Little John and the Friar in these games, and Robin's

relation to Maid Marian. Child quotes Ritson as saying:¹
"It plainly appears that Robin Hood, Little John and the
Friar were fitted out at the same time with the Morris dancers,
and, it would seem, united with them in one and the same
exhibition, -- but it must be confessed that no other
authority has been met with for constituting Robin Hood and
Little John integral characters of the Morris dance; ---
that Maid Marian and the Friar were almost constantly such
is proved beyond the possibility of a doubt."

Mr. Child quotes as authority for the Friar's
being in the Morris dance (Unconnected with the May-game).
Ben Jonson's "Masque of the Metamorphosed Gipsies", 1621,
where it is said that the absence of a Maid Marian and a
Friar is a surer mark than the lack of a hobby-horse that
a certain company cannot be Morris dancers. The lady was
an essential character. How and when she received the name
of Maid Marian in the English Morris is not known. The
earliest occurrence is in Barclay's fourth Eclogue, printed
soon after 1500.²

None of the more authentic stories of Robin
Hood prove the existence of Maid Marian as his mistress.³
It has been suggested that there is a derivation from the
French Marion. As we shall see, many pastourelles of the
thirteenth century treat of Robin Hood and Marion, and these

1. Child p. 45.
2. Child p. 46.
3. Douce p. 587.

two are the hero and the heroine of Adam de La Halle's pretty and lively play. "Le Jeu de Robin et Marion". The name Marian may be suggested from this, which was a great favorite with the common people of France. The great intercourse of these countries may have been the cause of the bringing in of this name. The story of Robin Hood was early rather dramatic and the transfer of a character from one to another was easy.

It is said that in a May game of 1559 there were "Robin Hood and Little John", and Maid Marion and Friar Tuck". But there is no mention of Maid Marian, in the two fragmentary plays preserved.¹ Toward the end of the sixteenth century Anthony Monday wrote a play:

"The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington," in which Robert takes refuge in Sherwood with Mathilda and changes his name to Robin Hood, and hers to Maid Marian. A good deal later there is a ballad about Robin Hood and his lass, the only ballad in which Maid Marian is more than a name. But neither the author of the play nor that of the ballad was, so far as is known repeating any popular tradition.²

The theme of the ballad, which is entitled "Robin Hood and Marian" is as follows: The Earl of Huntington, alias Robin Hood, is forced by fortune to part from his love Marian and take to the greenwood. Marian dresses herself "like a page", and armed with bow, sword and buckler, goes in search of Robin. Both being disguised, neither

1. Child p. 46.

2. Child p. 218.

knows the other until they have fenced for an hour, when Robin, who has lost some blood, calls to his antagonist to give over and join his hand. Marion knows his voice and makes herself known. A banquet follows and Marian remains in the wood. Though Maid Marian and Robin Hood had perhaps been coupled in popular sports, no one thought of putting more of her than her name into a ballad until someone composed this one. There is a bare mention of Marian in two of the other ballads given in Mr. Child's book.¹ Even in Barclay's Eclogue, where, as has been said, the earliest mention of her is found, and where Ritson says she is evidently connected with Robin Hood, the two are really kept distinct, for Codrus in that Eclogue wishes to hear "some mery fit of Maide Marian, or els of Robin Hood."² Not counting these provisions Maid Marian is a personage in the May game and Morris, sometimes paired with Robin Hood, sometimes with a Friar, in what relation is not known.

But to return to the Robin Hood ballads.

The most skilful and complete of all is "A Little Geste of Robin Hood and his Men, and of the Proud Sheriff of Nottingham." This ballad has an epic regularity of construction, and is eminently original, having no parallel in any of the fifty other ballads collected by Ritson. These are all formed upon incidents in the Geste, upon earlier "rhymes" or upon rude compositions and are of value

1. Child p. 198 and p. 209.

2. Child p. 218.

only as showing how a popular story will enlarge and spread.

The geste tells the adventures of Robin Hood with a knight, with the sheriff of Nottingham and with the king. A short resumé of the story will give the principal points as they are found all through English literature, for the later poets base their ballads on the same theme.

1. Robin Hood relieved a knight who had fallen into poverty by lending him money on the security of Our Lady. The knight recovered his lands which had been pledged to St. Mary Abbey, and set out to obtain the loan. Robin Hood, having taken from a monk of the abbey twice the sum lent, declared that Our Lady had discharged the debt, and would receive nothing more from the knight.

11. Little John insidiously took service with Robin Hood's enemy, the sheriff of Nottingham, and put the sheriff into Robin Hood's hands. The sheriff, who had sworn to help and not to harm the outlaw and his men treacherously set upon them at a shooting match, and they had to take refuge in the knight's castle. Missing Robin Hood, the sheriff made a prisoner of the knight; and Robin Hood slew the sheriff and rescued the knight.

111. The king, coming in person to take Robin Hood and the knight, disguised himself as an abbot. He was stopped by the outlaw, feasted on his own deer, and entertained with an exhibition of archery, in the course of which he was recognized by Robin Hood, who asked his grace

and received it if he and his men would enter the king's service. The king disguised himself and his company in the green of the outlaws, and going back to Nottingham, caused a general flight of the people, which he stopped by making himself known. He pardoned the knight Robin Hood, after fifteen month's service at court, deserted by all but John and Scathlock, obtained a week's leave of absence to go on a pilgrimage to St. Mary Magdalen of Barnsdale, and did not return for twenty-two years.

As to the death of Robin Hood, the tradition is that he died in a nunnery where he had gone for medical aid. The nun who bled him, having recognized him, intentionally drew too much blood and he died. May-games fell out of fashion, and the memory of Robin Hood grew dim or degenerated. Then Anthony Monday and Henry Chettle wrote the drama: "The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington." The play was popular. It has a good plot, the incidents of the ballads being skillfully adapted; and the scene, which is laid in the woods, possesses great charm and freshness. The play gave new life to the legend, but converted the old favorites to lords and ladies in disguise. But they became popular, and the supposed nobility of Robin and Maid Marian was accepted as part of the original story.

In this connection it is interesting to note Tennyson's play, "The Foresters", which is an adaptation of the stories of Robin Hood and Maid Marian. On this one

Robin is the Earl of Huntington, and Marian the daughter of Sir Richard Lea. All the personages of the ballads, are introduced, their peculiar characteristics distinctly brought out. In the first act Robin Hood is outlawed; in the second Marian follows him to the woods; in the last all the difficulties are cleared away, for King Richard comes and pardons Robin Hood, gives him back his title, restores the land to Sir Richard Lea; the lost son returns; Sir John and the Sheriff are punished, and the play ends with a song and a country dance in which they all join. Tennyson has introduced a few new elements, but in the main has kept to the old legend, merely combining them, and has reproduced to a remarkable degree the spirit of the old ballads.

The latest adaptation of the theme is the comic opera "Robin Hood", by Reginald de Koven, libretto by Harry B. Smith. This one opens with a May-day fair, and there is a Morris-dance and a May-pole dance. Robert of Huntington comes to the fair, having won the prize in archery. He sees Lady Marian Fitzwalter and falls in love with her. Then comes the banishment; he joins the outlaws and they go to live in Sherwood forest. Marian follows them there; they get the best of the sheriff, and finally all ends happily with the pardon by the king. So much is made of the fair and the May-day games that it takes one back to the days of Robin Hood's greatest popularity in

the sixteenth century.

Ballads of other nations relating to classes of men, living in revolt against authority and society show some likeness to the English outlaw ballads. Spanish broadside ballads dating from the sixteenth century commemorate the valientes and guapos of cities, but Robin Hood and his men are mild compared to the guapos. There is an English-Norman story of an outlaw of the twelfth century: the hero of the novel "Foulques Fitzwain" is an outlaw, an adventurer of the Robin Hood type, - enemy of the king and friend of the poor.

Part 11.

But there are no outlaws in the ballads of Robin and Marion in France. There we deal especially with the hero of "Le Jeu de Robin et Marion." This work stands out as a monument in literature, and is of interest to us in showing the latest development of the story in France.

Robin and Marion are the traditional types of the rural lovers about whom center many pastourelles of the thirteenth century, and it is these French pastourelles which furnish to Adam de La Halle the material for his comedy: "Le Jeu de Robin et Marion." It should be remembered that it is not only the oldest type of a kind which was to flourish later, but also the first attempt in this class and Adam de La Halle may be placed among the founders of

dramatic art in France.

The author is a trouvère who was called in his country Adam le Bossu, but is better known as Adam de La Halle. Information as to his life is vague. He was born in Arras about 1230. He studied at the monastery of Vauchelles intending to take holy orders. But he fell in love and married; soon he regretted the interruption of his studies and planned to go to Paris to continue them. But a bull withdrawing from married clergymen ecclesiastic privileges cooled his enthusiasm. He was soon drawn into the troubles of Arras and obliged to leave and take refuge with his family at Douai, probably about 1265.

It was the custom for the great lords to have poets and musicians among their followers and Adam le Bossu was probably attached to the Count d' Artois in this capacity. In 1282 the Count was sent to Sicily. Adam followed his benefactor, and composed for the amusement of the court the charming pastoral of Robin and Marion. He died in southern Italy in 1285.

Adam was celebrated as a poet and a musician. Compared to modern complex harmony his music seems very elementary. But the intervals forming the base of our system were proscribed then, and those which they enjoyed seem discordant to us. So we cannot appreciate Adam's musical talent, but must rely on the praise of his contemporaries.¹

1. Langlois p. 5.

It was the custom toward the end of the twelfth century to introduce refrains from popular songs into poems which were not meant to be sung, and this custom still prevailed in the thirteenth century. But Adam probably did not mean to do this. The songs, like the rustic dances and games were part of rural life, and it is for this reason that he makes his shepherds sing so often, and chooses the most popular songs.

In changing to Christianity the heathen people kept many legends, traditions and fêtes and these played an important part in the lives of the people of the middle ages.^{1,2} The fêtes for May are especially rich for literature and music, as was noticed in the English customs. They celebrate the renewal of the joys of spring, the re-awakening of nature, the return of flowers, and, in particular, love. The change of seasons being more important in the country, it was there that these fêtes were important. "Le Jeu de la Feuillee", the first of Adam's dramas, was played at the fêtes of May in Arras in 1260. After this rude, exuberant, coarse farce the pleasant refined pastoral of Robin and Marion is a great contrast, and shows the versatility of the author.

The pastourelle was one of the varieties of lyric poetry of the thirteenth century. The subject was invariable.² On a beautiful morning of spring, a knight is

1. Langlois p. 13.

2. Jeanroy, Chap. 1.

riding across the plains, dreaming of love; he sees a maiden who is guarding some sheep, and approaches her and makes many gallant speeches to her. The adventure may have various endings: usually the shepherdess refuses to believe in the sudden love of the knight; she is only a simple peasant, and sends him back to ladies of his rank; she has a sweetheart to whom she is true, or she is afraid of being surprised. But he has an answer for everything; he swears he cannot live without her, that he will marry her and take her to his castle, or if she prefers he will live with her in the fields. Sometimes there is no need of all these promises; or sometimes things do not go so smoothly: she calls for help and father, brothers or sweetheart come from a neighboring wood, and if the knight doesn't get away in time, there are blows.

If we should take a pastourelle, cut out the narrative and leave only the dialogue, we should have a little drama which would be a miniature of *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion*. Adam de La Halle's piece is nothing more than a pastourelle in a new frame. But the subject has not changed: A knight who is hunting meets a pretty shepherdess and stops to offer her his love. Marion loves Robin and prefers him to all the knights in the world, so she sends away the gallant hunter. Robin comes, and she tells him the adventure. The two lovers enjoy their lunch together and then he returns to the village to find some friends to

come and keep holiday with them, and if necessary help them to resist the knight if he should come back. This comes to pass, in fact, but before Robin's return, and Marion is alone to defend herself against the new attempts. She is victorious again, and the knight passes off his ill-humor on Robin who arrives unluckily. The knight carries off Marion, but she struggles against him, and he lets her go and leaves the place. At sight of Marion Robin soon forgets the blows he has received, and his friends coming up, they prepare for a fête: there are games and dances, ending up with a feast spread out on the grass.

This is the subject of Robin and Marion - it is that of all the pastourelles except for minor details and contains the elements of the numerous bucolics in narrative form which were in vogue in the thirteenth century. Monmerqué and Michel have collected all the ballads they could find which have reference to Robin and Marion, and in their books are given nine motets and twenty-seven pastourelles.¹ Two of these, one by Perrin d'Angecort² and the other by Jean Moniot of Paris,³ are mentioned as those which probably gave Adam de La Halle his ideas. But it seems more likely that he was not inspired by any one in particular, but knew them all. He condensed them, and what we find in his work are the traits common to all. With materials taken from many sources, he constructed a

1. M. and M. pp. 31-49.

2. M. and M. p. 27.

3. M. and M. pp. 33-34.

monument which is his own peculiar work.

The rural diversions which form the principal picture of Adam's comedy are often described in the pastourelles. The program of the ceremony varies little. First a king is chosen for the game of Kings and Queens and when he is seated the fun begins. Then they show their skill on stilts; they drink and eat cakes. There is always music; sometimes the players are amateurs, sometimes professionals. The music has hardly begun when they are all ready to dance. The lovers all pair off together, and all sorts of steps are executed. Sometimes each one sings a song.

Adam took not only the two principal elements of his work from the pastourelles, but also some additional details, as for instance Robin's struggle with the wolf which has carried off one of Marion's sheep.¹ Three pieces in Bartsch's collection contain episodes much like this one.² But if Adam was inspired by the pastourelles, he did not reproduce them slavishly, and the work of adapting them was done with such cleverness that it cannot be praised too much. He made use of traditional themes, and he did not change the nature of any, but with slight modifications appropriated them to his purpose. But in those which he took as models one role always had to be sacrificed. If Marion gave in Robin became ludicrous;

1. Langlois. *Le Jeu Ver.* 597-618.

2. Guy, p. 505.

if she resisted, the rich and gallant traveller seemed to be a fool. It is easy to see the difficulty that Adam had to overcome. He managed to steer clear of either extreme, and escaped without shocking his aristocratic audience, and without compromising the value of his work.

The method he used was as clever as it was simple and clear. He softened all the traits which tradition furnished to him. He observed nature carefully. He took pains to paint reality in general, as a friendly observer sees it. He liked to depict the peasants in their real condition, to show them in their rustic occupations, or in their simple noisy pastimes, clothed in their own peculiar costumes and speaking their own language.¹

The second part of the Jeu - the rural fête - shows that Adam preferred moderation. He was not ignorant of the custom of ending the description of country diversions by a fight.² He did not exactly pass over it in silence; he permitted his character to have just little quarrels, and stopped them almost before they had started. Adam had the art of drawing from his models only the pleasant, and he offers us a picture where the colors are cleverly blended, where gaiety seldom changes into low farce and where the pastourelle does not end in treachery or in violent struggles.

It is evident that Adam created a new type.

1. Langlois p. 19.

2. Guy, p. 508.

To group in a single poem and put into a single frame ideas which before were scattered in various pieces, to transform these ideas in such a way as to bring about a harmonious agreement, to modify the scenes in such a way as to arrange them better, is certainly invention to a certain extent.¹ He enriched all of this matter to a singular degree, and enlarged the domain of the pastourelle.

But the minstrel's true title to glory is in having transferred to the theatre the simple story of the love of two shepherds; in having changed into action an account already told a hundred times, and into dialogue conversation which had been before related only indirectly. Robin, Marion and the knight had talked before only through an interpreter. Contrary to his predecessors, Adam completely effaces himself in order to let only his character talk. For the varied ancient rythm he substituted the uniform verse of eight syllables. He had his players perform under the eyes of the audience rural pastimes which before were hardly described. And yet, although different in form and in length from the pastourelles, the type which Adam invented kept the characteristics of the poems which inspired it. It has no serious problem, no criticism, no politics, no allusions. Of all the writings of La Halle, it is the only one which has no satire.²

1. Guy, p. 509.

2. Guy, p. 511.

The comedy of Robin and Marion shows the dances which were in vogue in the country in the thirteenth century,¹ and the games as well.² The poet has described them because they show so well the traits of some of the characters. And yet Peronnelle, the gay young girl, and Huary the poor fiddler, Gautier and the insignificant Baudon remain in the background and the three principal characters are clearly brought out. As to the knight, Aubert, there is little to say. He interests us only from one point of view: even while begging Marion to grant him her good graces, he thinks of the distance which separates them, he remembers that she is a shepherdess and he an aristocrat. He treats Robin roughly, but probably not with more harshness than the lords of the thirteenth century were accustomed to use toward their vassals.

Marion rails at Aubert, and disconcerts him by making fun of him. She is care-free, and thinks only of enjoying herself. She always has a song or a laugh on her lips. In her soul there is a place for only one sentiment that of peaceful love, love without passion. But she really cherishes Robin, she does not cease thinking of him, she adjusts herself to his wishes,³ she admires him, she defends him,⁴ and by this attachment which nothing changes, she wins our sympathies.

1. Langlois, Ver. 196-228.

2. Langlois, Ver. 441-596.

3. Langlois, Ver. 166-168.

4. Langlois, Ver. 336-340.

In Robin, Adam's idea was to portray a sympathetic character, one worthy of Marion's devotion. If the peasant trembles before the knight, and receives blows almost under the eyes of his sweetheart without trying to defend himself, it is because he is not used to struggling against people for whom war is a trade. Just let the wolf come, and he faces a danger familiar to him. He is not a coward, but he has his faults. When he pretends that if he finds his rival there will be a hot fight,¹ he is boasting. When he affirms, he who was lying in the bushes while the knight was carrying away Marion that he was about to hurry to help her, but his comrades held him back, and that in his rage, he escaped three times from them,² he alters the truth, and invents a story for his own glory. But if we forget this he deserves only esteem, and we do not wonder that Marion sets him up as a rural hero. A graceful dancer, fast runner, expert in singing, good musician, faithful and generous, he can not but please. His language and his ways are refined, and he gets angry³ when some coarse words are said before his sweetheart.

The principal actors in the Jeu are interesting, but they are conventional, just as those who wrote before La Halle had made them. It is evident that their function is to amuse for a while, and then enter into oblivion. There are scenes in the Jeu of such grace and charm that

1. Langlois, Ver. 132-138.

2. Langlois, Ver. 420-426.

3. Langlois, Ver. 486-490.

they disarm the critic. These scenes constitute the real worth of the pastoral. It does not contain deep intrigue, complex characters nor illusions of interest to the historian, but graceful couplets, pleasant speeches and fresh and charming pictures.

Le Jeu de Robin et Marion was probably played for the first time in southern Italy, written for the Count d' Artois and his companions in arms. The contrast between the character of such a public and the nature of such an amusement is only apparent. For, although rough in combat, on the return to the castle they became gallants, and song makers, loving the company of ladies, poetry and music, and encouraging art in all its forms. Adam's piece then was in harmony with the tastes of his audience, and its success was brilliant.

After being presented in Italy, the Jeu was performed the first time in Arras after Adam was dead. The man who undertook to introduce it had a sort of dramatic prolog; "Le Jeu du Pélerin"; which, although very mediocre from an esthetic point of view, is valuable for the biography of Adam, and because by comparing it with the play itself we are able to distinguish the interpolations in the latter¹ which are evidently due to the author of the "Jeu du Pélerin". Whether there were other presentations is not known; it is unusual to have any

1. Romania, Vol. 24.

information even about a first performance. There remain three manuscripts of *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion*, another indication of its brilliant success and of its survival.¹ Before the invention of printing no other piece has been preserved in so many copies.

If this work of Adam's was so successful it is very likely that there were many imitations, for the middle age was very poor in invention. As soon as one author created a new type there was a crowd of imitators, and probably Adam's invention did not escape the common fate. No imitation has come down to us, but this absence of manuscripts has already been explained. A letter of the year 1392 tells us that at that time a *Jeu de Robin et Marion* having seven or eight characters was presented every year at Angers. Langlois says that it is hard to tell whether this was Adam's play or an imitation; but was probably the former.² But after this letter we lose all trace of a drama having as subject the love of Robin and Marion. There is a trace of it in the fifteenth century in "*La Patience de Job*," where a scene between two shepherds, Robin and Marotem is evidently a reference to Adam's play.³

Popular sayings exist still which associate the names of Robin and Marion. There are others in which it would be easy to see a direct allusion to the *Jeu*.⁴

1. Langlois, pp. 25-27

2. Langlois, p. 28.

3. M. & M. p. 28.

4. Langlois, p. 29.

Although the play is no longer presented, there are at least memories of it in the villages of Hainaut. Arthur Dinaux says that the song "Robin m' aime, Robin m' a" is still frequently sung by the peasant girls of Hainaut, especially around Bavai, only there the name has been changed from Robin to Robert.¹

Part III.

In spite of the intercourse between France and England, there appears to have been no interchanging in the stories outside of the names. These, however, it does seem as if the English borrowed from the French. As has been noted, Robin is a French name, probably brought over by the Normans to England. Robin Hood ballads were not known before the fourteenth century, while the French ballads were most popular in the thirteenth century. Nothing could be more natural than for the Normans to apply the name they knew so well to the Saxon hero. The name of Marian does not appear in the English ballads until much later: as has been noted, she was first mentioned in 1500, and does not appear in connection with the Robin Hood ballads until the eighteenth century. But even in 1500 the French had long known Robin and Marion, and they

1. M. & M. p. 29.

2.

had been popular in the May-day games. When the people were looking for names for the characters in the May-games in England, it seems likely that they were influenced by the French customs. The strange fact is that in spite of the linking of the names of Robin and Marion in France, Robin Hood and Marian were not at first connected in England. But this can be explained by the fact that in the earlier records, the lady of the May, Maid Marian, is the central figure, and it was not until later that Robin Hood and his archers were introduced.

It seems to me that the fact that the characters of the heroes of the two legends are so different explains why Marian was not sooner joined with Robin Hood. After their connection in the May-games their relation seems to have been taken as an established fact, for since that time the poets who have treated the subject have the two as hero and heroine.

Robin Hood in England and Robin in France stand for different ideas. Robin Hood is the people's hero, the ideal champion of their cause, their knight-errant and avenger, the one who saw to the more equal distribution of wealth, transferring from the opulent to the indigent. He reflects the popular character. He is open-handed, brave, merciful, good-humored, loyal, woman-protecting, priestcraft-hating, Mary-loving, God-fearing, somewhat rough withal and fond of a fight above all things.

Robin is in no sense a hero of the French people. He is merely the type of the rustic lover. He is generous, light-hearted, more refined than his companions, loyal to his lady love, but not over brave, and inclined to be boastful. His name was popular with the peasants, and perhaps he was thought of as an ideal lover, but he did not hold the place in their hearts that the English hero held with his people. The French Robin is not such a real, living, lovable human being as Robin Hood. They are both of the people - that is in the early ballads Robin Hood is a peasant, although later he came to be thought of as being of noble origin. But even then he lost none of his value for them, because he lived in the greenwood with them, and the cause of the peasant class was his cause.

Thierry gives Robin Hood a political significance, but most writers disagree with him on this point. There is no mention whatever of politics in the story in France. Few characters are introduced, and they are only Robin and Marion's friends and the one knight. Politics then plays no part in the story in either country.

Marian in England was for a long time merely a personage in the May-games. There is so little mention of her in any other capacity that it is hard to form any idea of her character. In the one ballad, "Robin Hood and Marian", and in Anthony Monday's play, she is certainly loyal to Robin Hood, and in the latter is the "chaste

Mathilda." Although here she is of noble origin, in other places she is a simple peasant maiden until the recent adaptations of the story. In Tennyson's play she is all that is true, noble and lovable.

Enough has already been said of the French Marion to show that she was only a peasant girl, but her character as Adam de La Halle depicts it is more to be admired than Robin's. In both countries Marion was connected with the May-games, but in France it was only as a character in La Halle's play, while in England she was for a long time queen of the May.

In the two countries the stories are of the spring-time and woodland, and it is this setting which makes perhaps the most attractive feature in both. Robin Hood was dear to English imagination as the representative of forest life, the joyous tenant of the greenwood, rejoicing in entire unrestraint. There is nowhere in literature a heartier delight in the woodland than in the ballads which celebrate this hero.

The difference in the feeling of the people in England toward Robin Hood and in France toward Robin is clearly shown in the development of the story. In England we know nothing of him until he is a well established favorite of the people. The first details were given a hundred and fifty years after he is supposed to have lived. From that time on his popularity increased until in the

eighteenth century it was at its greatest height. After that ballads were no longer written about him but the story has been kept alive through Tennyson's play and down to the present day in the opera of Robin Hood.

In France there has been no such continuous development. Since the fourteenth century, when Adam's play was written, there has been no change, and popular quotations are the only traces we find of it now. There seems sufficient explanation for this in the characters of the two heroes. For the French he was simply a type of the rustic lover. For the English his name became a household word, and himself the universal darling of the common people, and he was worthy of the place they gave him.

In England and in France then, there is no similarity in the stories themselves. The only point they have in common is the setting, which is in the woods. The only interchange has been in the names, and it seems more than likely that the fact that the names are the same is not due to accident. Although I could find no authority where such a statement was made, from the evidence accumulated it seems to me that the names of Robin and Maid Marian are due to the influence of the French Robin and Marion. It would be most interesting if some proof of this could be found, but because of the lack of any authentic records of the real history of Robin Hood, it must all remain a matter of mere conjecture.

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